
The Case for Parent Leadership

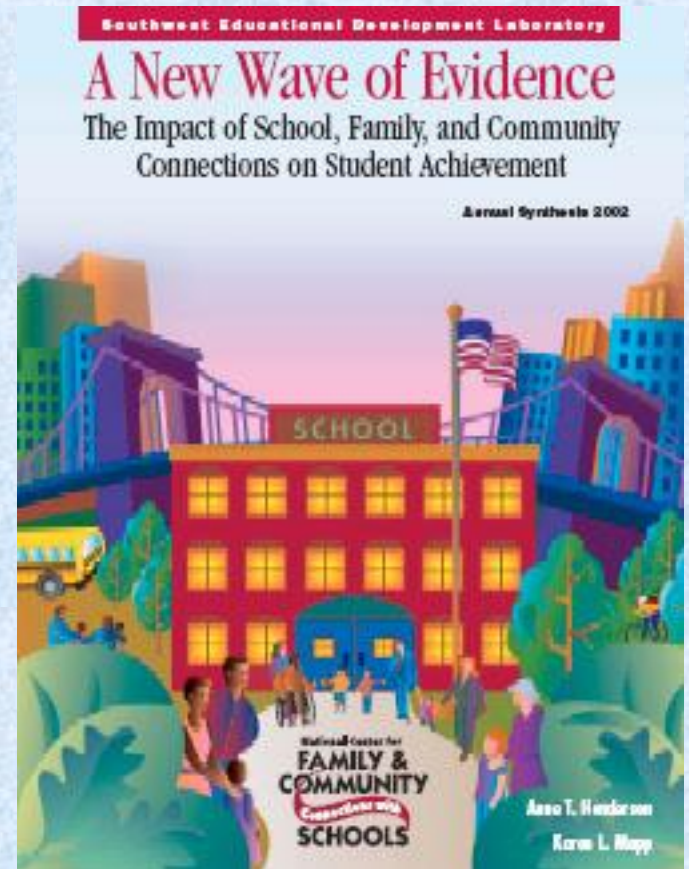
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A New Wave of Evidence:

The Impact of School, Family and Community Connections on Student Achievement

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www.sedl.org/connections



Headline from the research:

**When families are
involved at home and
at school –
Children do better in
school, and the
schools get better**



If their Parents are Involved, Students from All Backgrounds Tend To:

- ✓ **Earn higher grades and test scores**
- ✓ **Enroll in higher-level programs**
- ✓ **Be promoted and earn credits**
- ✓ **Adapt well to school and attend regularly**
- ✓ **Have better social skills and behavior**
- ✓ **Graduate and go on to higher education**

Big Story #1: Families do a LOT

Families of all backgrounds are involved at home

- ✓ **Talk about school**
- ✓ **Help plan for higher education**
- ✓ **Keep focused on learning and homework.**
- ✓ **Encourage their children**



Big Story #2: Advocacy is Protective

The more families can be advocates for children and support their progress, the better their children do, and the longer they stay, in school.



What are Advocates?

1. Know how system works
2. Can work with school staff
3. Guide children through the system
4. Help plan child's future
5. Know where to get help



Big Story #3: Programs Work

Programs designed to engage families in supporting children's learning lead to improved student achievement over the long term.



Chicago Parent Centers

Outcome	Program	Comparison
K readiness	46.7%	25.1%
Child abuse	5.0	10.3
Repeat grade	23.0	38.4
Special ed.	14.4	24.6
HS Grad	65.7	54.5

N=1534 students

Reynolds and Clements, 2005

Big Story #4: Link to Learning

Parent and community involvement that is designed to improve student learning has a greater effect on achievement.



Link to Learning/How Will It:

- ✓ **Help parents know what their children are learning and doing in class?**
- ✓ **Promote high standards for student work?**
- ✓ **Help parents assist children at home?**
- ✓ **Promote discussion about improving student progress?**
- ✓ **Help families see good teaching?**

Research Brief

Students' reading and math scores (3-5th grades) improved 40-50% faster when teachers :

- met with families face-to-face**
- sent materials on ways to help their child at home**
- telephoned routinely about progress**

(Westat and Policy Studies Associates,
2001)

Big Story #5: Community Groups Get Results

- **Upgraded school facilities**
- **Improved school leadership and staffing**
- **Higher quality learning programs**
- **Resources to improve teaching and curriculum**
- **Funding for after-school programs and family supports**

(Lewis, Mediratta and Fruchter, 2002)

Big Story #6: The Joining Process

- **Welcome: build personal relationships**
- **Honor: Identify strengths and remove barriers**
- **Connect: Embrace partnership and share power**



Research Brief: Families Become Involved When:

- ✓ Parents understand that they **SHOULD** be involved
- ✓ Parents feel **CAPABLE** of making a contribution
- ✓ Parents feel **INVITED** by the school and their children

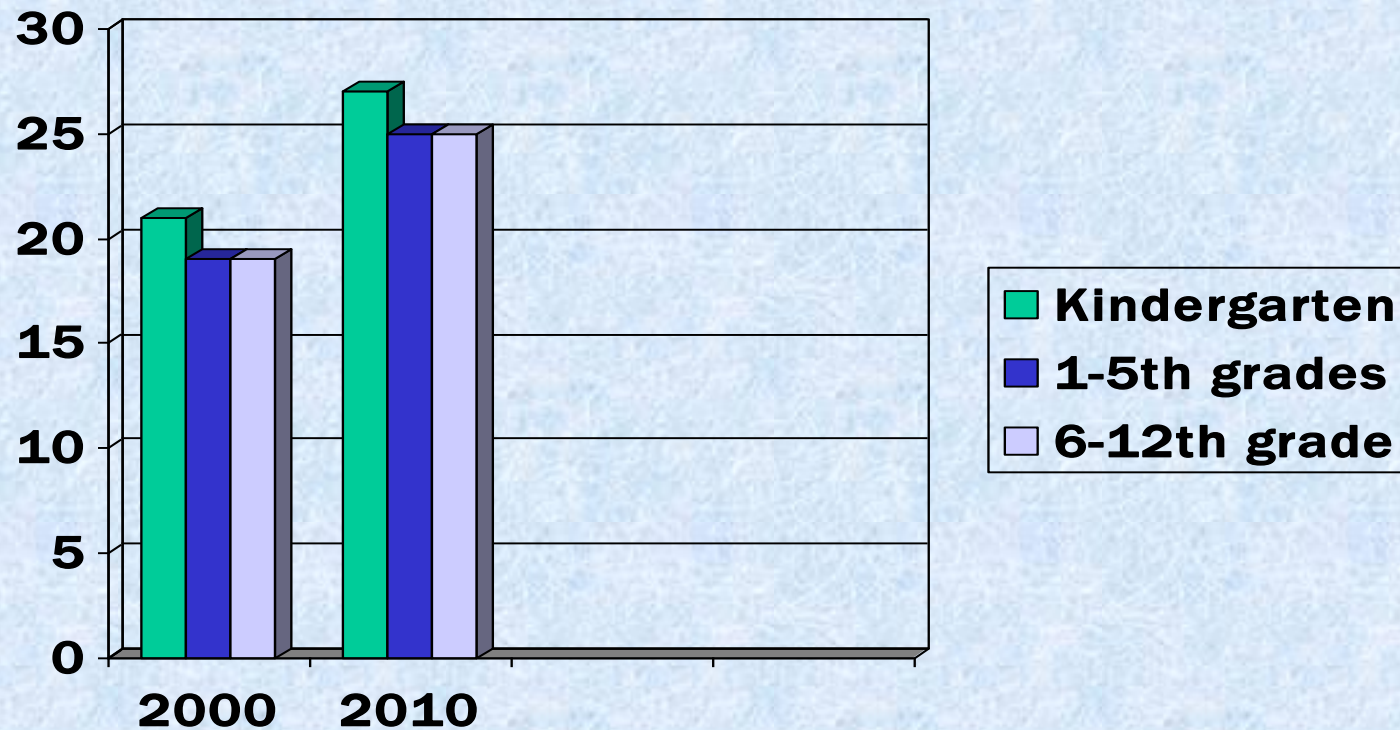
(Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 1997)



America is Changing

- ✓ Immigration
- ✓ Poverty
- ✓ New Economy/New Standards
for Achievement

Children of Immigrants



Children in Poverty

73 million children in the U.S.

- **40% live in poverty – family unable to provide basic necessities**
- **18% live below poverty line**
- **81% have at least one working parent**
- **Number rising steadily since 2000**

NAEP 2007/US Achievement

% Proficient	Math	Reading
Grade 4	38%	31%
Grade 8	31%	29%

NAEP 2007/WI Achievement

% Proficient	Math	Reading
Grade 4	54%	44%
Grade 8	45%	36%